



Drug executives: Big jump in vaccine supply is coming soon

By M. PERRONE and L. NEERGAARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — COVID-19 vaccine makers told Congress on Tuesday to expect a big jump in the delivery of doses over the coming month, and the companies insist they will be able to provide enough for most Americans to get inoculated by summer.

By the end of March, Pfizer and Moderna expect to have provided the U.S. government with a total of 220 million vaccine doses, up sharply from the roughly 75 million shipped so far. "We do believe we're on track," Moderna President Stephen Hoge said, outlining ways the company has ramped up production. "We think we're at a very good spot."

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EXTRA DOSES

In this Jan. 22, 2021, file photo, certified medical assistants Martha Sida, from left, Tina Killebrew and Cynthia Bernal prepare doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a vaccination center at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

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Drug executives: Big jump in vaccine supply is coming soon

Continued from Front

That's not counting a third vaccine, from Johnson & Johnson, that's expected to get a green light from regulators soon. The Biden administration said Tuesday that it expects about 2 million doses of that vaccine to be shipped in the first week, but the company told lawmakers it should provide enough of the single-dose option for 20 million people by the end of March.

Looking ahead to summer, Pfizer and Moderna expect to complete delivery of 300 million doses each, and J&J aims to provide an additional 100 million doses. That would be more than enough to vaccinate every American adult, the goal



In this Feb. 12, 2021, file photo, scripps health official draws from a vial of the COVID-19 vaccine prior to administering it at their new drive-thru vaccination site at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in Del Mar, Calif.

Associated Press

set by the Biden administration. Two other manufacturers, Novavax and AstraZeneca, have vaccines in the pipeline and anticipate eventually adding to those totals. Asked point-

edly if they face shortages of raw materials, equipment or funding that would throw off those schedules, all of the manufacturers expressed confidence that they had enough sup-

plies and had already addressed some of the early bottlenecks in production.

"At this point I can confirm we are not seeing any shortages of raw materials," said Pfizer's John Young.

The hearing by a House subcommittee came as U.S. vaccinations continue to accelerate after a sluggish start and recent disruptions caused by winter weather. More than 44 million Americans have received at least one dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, and about 1.4 million per day got a first or second dose over the past seven days, according to the CDC.

But state health officials say demand for inoculations still vastly outstrips the limited weekly shipments provided by the federal government.

"The most pressing challenge now is the lack of supply of vaccine doses," Rep. Diana DeGette, a Colorado Democrat, said as she opened the hearing. "Some of the companies here today are still short of the number of doses they promised to initially deliver when they last testified before this subcommittee in July." Both Pfizer and Moderna failed to meet delivery quotas for the initial doses of their vaccines late last year. That's prompted Congress to scrutinize the companies' plans for vaccine development and delivery, which they noted benefited from \$16 billion in federal funding.

"A significant amount of American tax dollars were invested to be able to produce the vaccine immediately upon approval," said Rep. David McKinley, a West Virginia Republican, who questioned executives on why they were still

unable to meet demand for the vaccines.

Nearly 14% of Americans have received at least an initial dose of the two-shot-regimen vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna.

The Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed focused most of its efforts on racing vaccines through research, development and manufacturing. But little planning or funding went to coordinating vaccination campaigns at the state and local levels. That effort is now picking up speed with plans for mass vaccination sites and an increasing supply distributed to chain pharmacies.

Rep. Frank Pallone, a New Jersey Democrat, questioned J&J Vice President Richard Nettles on why the company has fallen behind on the schedule outlined in its federal contract, which included delivering 12 million doses by late February. Nettles said only that the company has faced "significant challenges" due to its "highly complex" manufacturing process. But he noted the company is partnering with drugmaker Sanofi to further expand production. Even with no manufacturing or supply interruptions, other issues could delay or block the U.S. from vaccinating 70% to 80% of its population — the critical threshold needed to neutralize COVID-19 spread.

About 1 in 3 Americans say they definitely or probably will not get the vaccine, according to a recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Concerns about safety were the reason most frequently cited for vaccine hesitancy, despite few serious side effects reported with the currently available vaccines.

World Food Prize laureates ask Biden to elevate hunger



In this Sept. 23, 2019 file photo, African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina, the winner of the 2017 World Food Prize, speaks at U.N. headquarters.

Associated Press

By **DAVID PITT**
Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — A group of 24 scientists, economists, researchers and other winners of the World Food Prize sent a letter Tuesday to President Joe Biden asking him to focus on alleviat-

ing global hunger, poverty and malnutrition. The World Food Prize Foundation released the letter that describes United States involvement in battling global hunger as foundational.

"American leadership will be a beacon that helps to

light the way and a catalyst for action that gets us to a world in 2030 where we live within our planetary boundaries, everyone is well-nourished, and no one goes to bed hungry," said Lawrence Haddad, 2018 World Food Prize laureate and executive director of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. He said current food systems must improve because they have contributed to rising hunger and have been too slow to reduce child undernutrition. He added that obesity is increasing, biodiversity is being squandered and community resilience is being undermined. He said it's time for everyone to think and act differently to make a lasting impact.

Capitol defenders blame bad intelligence for deadly breach

By MARY CLARE JALONICK,
MICHAEL BALSAMO and
LISA MASCARO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Faulty intelligence was to blame for the outmanned Capitol defenders' failure to anticipate the violent mob that invaded the iconic building and halted certification of the presidential election on Jan. 6, the officials who were in charge of security declared Tuesday in their first public testimony on the insurrection.

The officials, including the former chief of the Capitol Police, pointed their fingers at various federal agencies — and each other — for their failure to defend the building as supporters of then-President Donald Trump overwhelmed security barriers, broke windows and doors and sent lawmakers fleeing from the House and Senate chambers. Five people died as a result of the riot, including a Capitol Police officer and a woman who was shot as she tried to enter the House chamber with lawmakers still inside.

Former Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund, who resigned under pressure after the attack, and the other officials said they had expected the protests to be similar to two pro-Trump events in late 2020 that were far less violent.

He said he hadn't seen an FBI field office report that warned of potential violence citing online posts about a "war." And he and a House official disputed each other's versions of decisions that January day and in advance about calling for the National Guard. Sund described a scene as the mob arrived at the perimeter that was "like nothing" he had seen in his 30 years of policing and argued that the insurrection was not the result of poor planning by Capitol Police but of failures across the board.

The hearing was the first of many examinations of what happened that day, coming almost seven weeks after the attack and over a week after the Sen-



Former U.S. Capitol Police Chief Steven Sund testifies before a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs & Senate Rules and Administration joint hearing on Capitol Hill, Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021, to examine the January 6th attack on the Capitol.

Associated Press

ate voted to acquit Trump of inciting the insurrection by telling his supporters to "fight like hell" to overturn his election defeat. Fencing and National Guard troops still surround the Capitol in a wide perimeter, cutting off streets and sidewalks that are normally full of cars, pedestrians and tourists.

Sund insisted the invasion was not his or his agency's fault. "No single civilian law enforcement agency — and certainly not the USCP — is trained and equipped to repel, without significant military or other law enforcement assistance, an insurrection of thousands of armed, violent, and coordinated individuals focused on breaching a building at all costs," he testified.

The joint hearing, part of an investigation by two Senate committees, was the first time the officials testified publicly about the events of Jan. 6. In addition to Sund, former Senate Sergeant-at-Arms Michael Stenger, former House Sergeant-at-Arms Paul Irving and Robert Contee, the acting chief of police for the Metropolitan Police Department, testified.

Like Sund, Irving and Stenger resigned under pressure after the deadly attack. They were Sund's supervisors and in charge

of security for the House and Senate.

"We must have the facts, and the answers are in this room," Senate Rules Committee Chairwoman Amy Klobuchar said at the beginning of the hearing. The Rules panel is conducting the joint probe with the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Much remains unknown about what happened before and during the assault. How much did law enforcement agencies know about plans for violence that day, many of which were public? How did the agencies share that information with each other? And how could the Capitol Police have been so ill-prepared for a violent insurrection that was organized online?

Sund told the lawmakers that he learned only after the attack that his officers had received a report from the FBI's field office in Norfolk, Virginia, that forecast, in detail, the chances that extremists could bring "war" to Washington the following day. The head of the FBI's office in Washington has said that once he received the Jan. 5 warning, the information was quickly shared with other law enforcement agencies through a joint terrorism

task force. Sund said Tuesday that an officer on the task force had received that memo and forwarded it to a sergeant working on intelligence for the Capitol Police but that the information was not sent on to other supervisors.

"How could you not get that vital intelligence?" asked Senate Homeland Chairman Gary Peters, D-Mich., who said the failure of the report to reach the chief was clearly a major problem. "That information would have been helpful," Sund acknowledged.

Even without the intelligence, there were clear signs that violence was a possibility on Jan. 6. Far-right social media users openly hinted for weeks that chaos would erupt at the U.S. Capitol while Congress convened to certify the election results.

Sund said he did see an intelligence report created within his own department warning that Congress could be targeted on Jan. 6. But he said that report assessed the probability of civil disobedience or arrests, based on the information they had, as "remote" to "improbable" for the groups expected to demonstrate.

Contee, the acting city police chief, also suggested that no one had flagged

the FBI information from Norfolk, Virginia, which he said came in the form of an email. He said he would have expected that kind of intelligence "would warrant a phone call or something."

Two officials disagreed on when the National Guard was called and on requests for the guard beforehand. Sund said he spoke to both Stenger and Irving about requesting the National Guard in the days before the riot, and that Irving said he was concerned about the "optics" of having them present.

Irving denied that, saying Sund's account was "categorically false." Safety, not optics, determined the security posture, he said, and the top question was whether intelligence supported the decision.

"We all agreed the intelligence did not support the troops and collectively decided to let it go," Stenger said. He added that they were satisfied at the time that there was a "robust" plan to protect Congress. Once the violence had begun, Sund and Irving also disagreed on when the National Guard was requested — Sund said he requested it at 1:09 p.m., but Irving said he didn't receive a request until after 2 p.m., right as rioters breached the Capitol's West side.

Contee said he was "stunned" over the delayed response. He said Sund was pleading with Army officials to deploy National Guard troops as the rioting rapidly escalated. Police officers "were out there literally fighting for their lives" but the officials on the call appeared to be going through a "check the boxes" exercise, he said.

Pentagon officials, who will have a chance to testify before the committee at a second hearing next week, have said it took time to put the troops in position, and there was not enough contingency planning in advance. They said they offered the assistance beforehand but were turned down. □

Judge says wife of drug kingpin 'El Chapo' to stay in jail

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge has ordered the wife of Mexican drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to remain temporarily jailed after she was arrested and accused of helping her husband run his multibillion-dollar cartel and plotting his audacious escape from a Mexican prison in 2015.

Emma Coronel Aispuro, 31, appeared by video conference for an initial court appearance before a federal magistrate judge in Washington, D.C. The judge's order came after Coronel's attorney, Jeffrey Lichtman, said he would consent to her temporary detention after her arrest at Dulles International Airport in Virginia.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Robin Meriweather explained the charges to Coronel, who spoke to the judge through a Spanish interpreter. She said prosecutors had provided sufficient reason to keep Coronel behind bars for now and noted that her attorney had consented to the temporary detention. Prosecutor Anthony Nardozi said the U.S. government believed that Coronel should remain jailed, arguing that she "worked closely with the command-and-control structure" of the Sinaloa cartel, particularly with her husband. Nardozi said she conspired to



In this Feb. 12, 2019 file photo, Emma Coronel Aispuro, center, wife of Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, leaves federal court in New York.

Associated Press

distribute large quantities of drugs, knowing that they would be illegally smuggled into the U.S.

Nardozi said Coronel had access to criminal associates, including other members of the cartel, and "financial means to generate a serious risk of flight." If convicted, she could face more than 10 years in prison.

Her arrest was the latest twist in the bloody, multinational saga involving Guzman, the longtime head of the Sinaloa drug cartel. Guzman, whose two dramatic prison escapes in

Mexico fed into a legend that he and his family were all but untouchable, was extradited to the United States in 2017 and is serving life in prison.

And now his wife, with whom he has two young daughters, has been charged with helping him run his criminal empire. In a single-count criminal complaint, Coronel was charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana in the U.S. The Justice Department also accused her of helping her husband escape from a

Mexican prison in 2015 and participating in the planning of a second prison escape before Guzman was extradited to the U.S.

As Mexico's most powerful drug lord, Guzman ran a cartel responsible for smuggling mountains of cocaine and other drugs into the United States during his 25-year reign, prosecutors said in recent court papers. They also said his "army of sicarios," or "hit men," was under orders to kidnap, torture and kill anyone who got in his way.

His prison breaks became the stuff of legend and

raised serious questions about whether Mexico's justice system was capable of holding him accountable. In one case, he escaped through an entry under the shower in his cell to a milelong (1.6-kilometer-long) lighted tunnel with a motorcycle on rails. The planning for the escape was extensive, prosecutors say, with his wife playing a key role.

Court papers charge that Coronel worked with Guzman's sons and a witness, who is now cooperating with the U.S. government, to organize the construction of the underground tunnel that Guzman used to escape from the Altaplano prison to prevent his extradition to the U.S. The plot included purchasing a piece of land near the prison, firearms and an armored truck and smuggling him a GPS watch so they could "pinpoint his exact whereabouts so as to construct the tunnel with an entry point accessible to him," the court papers say.

Guzman was sentenced to life behind bars in 2019.

Coronel, who was a beauty queen in her teens, regularly attended Guzman's trial, even when testimony implicated her in his prison breaks. The two, separated in age by more than 30 years, have been together since at least 2007, and their twin daughters were born in 2011. □

Board leaders of Texas' grid operator resign after outages



Hundreds of a vehicles are staged in a parking lot as people wait in line at a food and water distribution site Monday, Feb. 22, 2021, in Houston.

Associated Press

By **PAUL J. WEBER**

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Four board leaders of Texas' embattled power grid operator said Tuesday they will resign following outage over more than 4 million customers losing power during a deadly winter freeze last week.

All of the board directors stepping down, including Chairwoman Sally Talberg, live outside of Texas, which only intensified criticism of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas.

The resignations are effective Wednesday, a day before Texas lawmakers

are set to begin hearings over the outages in the state Capitol. The board members acknowledged "concerns about out-of-state board leadership" in a letter to grid members and the state's Public Utility Commission, which oversees ERCOT.

"Our hearts go out to all Texans who have had to go without electricity, heat, and water during frigid temperatures and continue to face the tragic consequences of this emergency," the letter read. The other board

members are vice chairman Peter Cramton, Terry Bulger and Raymond Hepper. Talberg lives in Michigan and Bulger lives in Wheaton, Illinois, according to their biographies on ERCOT's website. Cramton and Hepper spent their careers working outside Texas. Historic snowfall and single-digit temperatures in Texas last week left millions without power and water for days. The storm was part of any icy blast across the Deep South that is blamed for at least 80 deaths. □

Canada's Trudeau, Cabinet abstain from China genocide vote

By **ROB GILLIES**
Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Canada's House of Commons voted Monday to declare that China is committing genocide against more than 1 million Uighurs in the western Xinjiang region but Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Cabinet abstained from the vote. The non-binding motion passed 266-0 as virtually all but Trudeau and his Cabinet voted for the measure that also called on the International Olympic Committee to move the 2022 Winter Olympics from Beijing.

A senior government official said declaring something in Parliament is not going to adequately get results in China and that work with international allies and partners is needed. The official spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly about the matter.

The main opposition parties supported the motion and control the majority of seats in the House of Commons. Trudeau's Cabinet is made up of 37 Liberal lawmakers including the prime minister. There are 154 lawmakers



Protesters gather outside the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, Ontario, Monday, Feb. 22, 2021.

Associated Press

ers from Trudeau's Liberal party in the House of Commons and the rest of the Liberal lawmakers voted freely on the motion.

Liberal Foreign Minister Marc Garneau abstained like the rest of the Cabinet. He said in a statement there should be a credible international investigation in response to allegations of genocide.

"We remain deeply disturbed by horrific reports of human rights violations in Xinjiang, including the use

of arbitrary detention, political re-education, forced labor, torture and forced sterilization," Garneau said. Opposition Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole said he's calling on the government to confirm the statement passed by the House of Commons and work with allies like the U.S. to push for an end to the camps and conduct by China.

"There is real suffering going on in China. There is a genocide happening,"

O'Toole said. "Our values are not for sale. And Mr. Trudeau needed to send that message today and he failed."

Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared before he left office that China's policies against Xinjiang's Muslims and ethnic minorities constituted crimes against humanity and genocide. His successor, Antony Blinken, reiterated the statement on his first day in office.

Researchers and rights

groups estimate that since 2016, China has rounded up a million or more Uighurs and other minorities into prisons and vast indoctrination camps that the state calls training centers.

Pompeo cited widespread forced birth control and forced labor among Uighurs.

The Associated Press reported last year that the Chinese government was systematically forcing sterilization and abortion on Uighur and other Muslim women and sent many to camps simply for having too many children.

The vote is the latest attempt to hold China accountable for its treatment of the Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim and ethnic Turkic minorities, who have been subjected to an unprecedented crackdown that is increasingly drawing international concern.

China denies any abuses and insists the steps it has taken are necessary to combat terrorism and a separatist movement.

China's envoy to Canada told Canadian parliamentarians over the weekend to butt out of China's internal affairs. □

Malaysia deports Myanmar migrants despite court order

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysian immigration authorities said Tuesday they have deported 1,086 Myanmar migrants, breaking a court order to halt their repatriation following an appeal by two human rights groups.

Just hours earlier, a high court granted a one-day stay order for the deportation of 1,200 Myanmar migrants to hear an appeal by Amnesty International Malaysia and Asylum Access Malaysia, which said refugees, asylum-seekers

and minors were among those being sent back.

Immigration chief Khairul Dzaimie Daud said the 1,086 had agreed to return home voluntarily on three Myanmar naval ships.

He stressed that they were all Myanmar nationals who were detained last year and didn't include any Muslim ethnic Rohingya refugees or asylum-seekers.

"All of them have agreed to return voluntarily without being forced by any parties," he said in a statement, adding that it was part of the department's normal repatriation program.

The statement didn't mention the court order or explain why only 1,086 were deported instead of 1,200.

Amnesty International called the decision "inhumane and devastating."

"It appears the authorities railroaded this shockingly cruel deportation before any proper scrutiny of the decision," it said in a statement.

"This life-threatening decision has affected the lives of more than a thousand people and their families, and leaves an indelible stain on Malaysia's human rights record, already in steep decline over the past year." The rights group earlier said the court would hear its appeal Wednesday and urged the government to reconsider its plans to send the migrants back home, where human rights violations are high following a Feb. 1 military

coup that deposed the country's elected leader, Aung San Suu Kyi.

It urged the government to give the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees access to the 1,200 migrants and all immigration detention centers in general, which Malaysia's government has denied since August 2019. The immigration department earlier said the migrants were held for offenses including not having valid travel documents, overstaying their visas and violating social visit passes.

But the two rights groups in their legal filing named three people registered with the UNHCR and 17 minors who have at least one parent still in Malaysia. □



In this image taken from a video, an immigration truck with security and unidentified people drives on a road that leads to Lumut Naval Base Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021 in Lumut, Malaysia.

Associated Press

Iran officially imposes curbs on UN nuclear inspections

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **KI-YOKO METZLER**

Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran officially started restricting international inspections of its nuclear facilities Tuesday, a bid to pressure European countries and President Joe Biden's administration to lift crippling economic sanctions and restore the 2015 nuclear deal.

World powers slammed the restrictions as a "dangerous" move.

It came as the International Atomic Energy Agency reported in a confidential document distributed to member countries and seen by The Associated Press that Iran had added 17.6 kilograms (38.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 20% to its stockpile as of Feb. 16.

It was the first official confirmation of plans Iran announced in January to enrich to the greater purity, which is just a technical step away from weapons-grade levels and far past the 3.67% purity allowed under the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Iran also increased its total enriched uranium stockpile to 2,967.8 kilograms (6,542.9 pounds), up from 2,442.9 kilograms (5,385.7 pounds) reported on Nov. 2, the IAEA reported.



Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif speaks with journalists following a conference in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021.

Iran's violations of the JCPOA and the move Tuesday to limit international inspections underscore the daunting task facing Biden as he seeks to reverse former President Donald Trump's decision to pull the U.S. unilaterally out of the deal in 2018. That left Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia struggling to keep it alive.

The JCPOA was the most significant pact between Iran and major world powers since its 1979 Islamic revolution, and Germany, France and Britain stressed their commitment Tuesday

to preserving it, urging Iran to "stop and reverse all measures that reduce transparency."

"The E3 are united in underlining the dangerous nature of this decision," the European powers said in a statement. "It will significantly constrain the IAEA's access to sites and to safeguards-relevant information."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said a new law had gone into effect Tuesday morning, under which Iran will no longer share surveillance footage of its nuclear facilities

with the U.N. agency.

"We never gave them live video, but (recordings) were given daily and weekly," Zarif said of the IAEA's access to information recorded by camera monitors. "The tape recording of our (nuclear) program will be kept in Iran."

The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Tehran's civilian nuclear agency, has promised to preserve the tapes for three months, then hand them over to the IAEA — but only if granted sanctions relief. Otherwise, Iran has vowed to erase the tapes, narrowing the

window for a diplomatic breakthrough.

Since Trump pulled the U.S. out of the JCPOA, Iran has gradually been violating its restrictions to put pressures on the remaining nations to come up with economic incentives to offset crippling American sanctions.

Besides surpassing the purity and stockpiles allowed, Iran has also been spinning advanced centrifuges and producing uranium metal.

Zarif stressed in a tweet Tuesday that Iran's new limits on nuclear inspections and other violations of the pact are reversible, insisting that the U.S. move first to revive the deal.

In a show of defiance, Cabinet spokesman Ali Rabiei outlined further developments in Iran's nuclear program on Tuesday. Over the last three weeks, he told reporters, Iran has installed and started feeding gas into an additional 148 high-tech IR2-m centrifuges at its Natanz nuclear enrichment facility and its fortified nuclear complex at Fordo, bringing the total number of centrifuges to up to 492. Another set of 492 centrifuges will be installed in the coming month, he said. He added that Iran has installed two cascades of even more advanced centrifuges at its nuclear enrichment facilities, but did not specify where. □

U.K. to push at G-7 for global standard on 'vaccine passports'



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson chairs a session of the UN Security Council on climate and security at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in London, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

By **JILL LAWLESS**

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain

plans to use its presidency of the Group of Seven economic powers to push for

an internationally recognized system of vaccine passports that could allow world travel to resume, though Prime Minister Boris Johnson acknowledged Tuesday that the idea raises "complex" ethical issues. The British government previously said it was not considering issuing vaccine passports to people who had been inoculated. But it has now set up a review into "COVID status certification" that will examine ways people can prove they don't have the coronavirus, either through vaccination or by showing a negative test result.

The government said it

would "look to introduce a system to allow vaccinated individuals to travel more freely internationally." It added it would work with other countries through the World Health Organization, the G-7 — whose presidency the U.K. holds this year — and other bodies on "a clear international framework with standards that provide consistency for passengers and industry alike."

"Introducing such a system also needs to be fair and not unduly disadvantage people who have yet to be offered — or gain access to — a vaccine," the government said in a document

outlining its plans to lift Britain's pandemic restrictions. "That being the case, the government does not expect this solution to be available quickly, and restrictions like those in place across the world are likely to continue for the near future."

The British government is also looking at how such proof might be used by employers, venue owners or organizers of large events. One option under consideration is using the National Health Service contact-tracing app, which millions of people in Britain have on their phones, to display COVID-19 test results. □



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Feud at top of Scottish politics mars independence push

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Together, politicians Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon took the quest for Scottish independence from long shot to strong possibility.

But now Scotland's former leader and his successor as first minister are locked in a feud that is tearing apart their Scottish National Party, even as its goal of an independent Scotland outside the United Kingdom is closer than ever.

The two former allies have traded accusations for months over who knew what and when about allegations against Salmond, who was tried and acquitted last year on sexual assault charges.

Salmond was scheduled to tell his version of the story Wednesday to a Scottish Parliament inquiry into how the Edinburgh-based government handled the allegations. He claims the sexual misconduct accusations in 2019 were part of a witch-hunt, and he won a civil lawsuit when Scotland's highest civil court ruled that the way the Scottish government had handled the matter was unlawful.

But Salmond on Tuesday canceled his appearance after his written witness statement was removed from the Scottish Parliament website. He had refused to testify, if it was not made public. It was taken down after the national prosecutors' office expressed concern about potential contempt of court, and later partially republished with some sections redacted.

Salmond accuses people within the Scottish National Party and the Scottish government of a "malicious and concerted effort" to sideline him politically. He

has also accused Sturgeon of lying about when she learned of the sex assault allegations and of breaking the code of conduct for government ministers. If that was found to be true, she would have to resign.

Sturgeon, who is due to testify in the inquiry once Salmond has appeared, accused her predecessor of making "wild claims" that there was a conspiracy against him.

"It is time for insinuation and assertion to be replaced with actual evidence," she said. "There is no evidence, because there was no conspiracy." The case has exposed a bitter rift between two former allies who have dominated Scottish politics for a generation.

Salmond, who led the SNP for two decades and was Scotland's first minister between 2007 and 2014, built the separatist party into a major political force and took the country to the brink of independence by holding a 2014 referendum. He stepped down as first minister after the "remain" side won, and Sturgeon, his friend and deputy, replaced him.

In 2019, Salmond was charged with sexual assault and attempted rape after allegations by nine women who had worked with him as first minister or for the party. Salmond called the charges "deliberate fabrications for a political purpose," and was acquitted after a trial in March 2020.

The SNP has become increasingly split between Salmond's supporters, who want a new independence referendum come what may, and supporters of the more cautious Sturgeon. Sturgeon and her allies are also critical of Salmond's efforts to stay in the public eye, especially his

talk show on the Kremlin-funded English-language television station RT.

Sturgeon's popularity, meanwhile, has been boosted by her response to the coronavirus pandemic. Her calm, measured style in regular media briefings contrasts with the erratic messaging and frequent policy shifts of U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is unpopular in Scotland.

The crisis is amplified by the hothouse atmosphere of politics in Scotland, a small nation of 5.5 million. Among the Scottish National Party figures accused by Salmond of colluding against him is chief executive Peter Murrell — Sturgeon's husband.

The feud threatens to derail a party that is riding high in



In this Feb. 10, 2020, file photo, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon speaks during a 'Scotland's European Future after Brexit' event at the European Policy Center in Brussels.

Associated Press

the polls and increasingly confident it can secure its long-held goal of leading Scotland out of the United Kingdom.

An election for the Scottish Parliament is due in May, and the SNP has a strong

lead in opinion polls. Sturgeon says that if she wins a majority, she will push for a new independence referendum and challenge Johnson in the courts, if the British government refuses to agree. □

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LOCAL



Ike's Bistro unveils vegan smorgasbord

EAGLE BEACH — Ike's bistro at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa surprises with an excellent, tasteful and varied vegan menu. Executive Chef Sandro Herold is obviously enthusiastic about the new offerings that fill up the place already. "People nowadays are a bit more conscious about what they eat. This menu offers a wide variety with creative vegan food items." We asked some of the guests about their experience: "delicious", "very tasty" "great food, great setting". Even teens, in general not too fond of health food, applauded the offerings. "We did not even miss the meat". Of course the restaurant also offers their extensive regular menu for the non-vegan guests containing all you wish From the Land or From the Sea.



Vegan is hot now, says the chef, and we had that confirmed by several guests. Ike's Bistro is an open air restaurant, located in the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa. Under a huge cabana with a view to the romantically lit pool of the resort you are seated in relaxed chairs and served by great waiters. And not unimportant: Covid-19 safe. Your senses are tickled because of the purity and freshness of the food items. You may choose for the unknown which is a three-course vegan chef tasting menu that can also be combined with a wine pairing. Or you select your choices from the menu. All dishes are 100% Vegan and are gluten-free unless labeled otherwise. Start with appetizers like Vegan Fish Taco, Chickpeas Tartare and Avocado, Spicy Buffalo Cauliflower Wings or Vegetable



Tempura. Tomato Basil Soup or Lemongrass Carrot Ginger Soup are simply delicious as are the Arugula Jackfruit Salad or Mesclun Salad. For the main course pick your pick: Sesame Ginger Duck (contains gluten), Stuffed Corn Chips and Avocado, Grilled Fish Filet and Roasted Cauliflower or Truffle Porcini Risotto & Grilled Tofu. This heavenly healthy trip reaches its end destination with a scrumptious dessert: Caribbean Snickers, a must-try! All of those choices embrace your inner senses with their freshness and clear flavors.

Vegan might be on the menu in many restaurants nowadays as 'the other option', but here at Ike's Bistro they celebrate vegan and you get hooked, that is a promise. Passion, creativity, purity, dedication to a concept and a beautiful setting take care of an enchanting experience. Vegans and non-vegans are welcome, Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa has got it all covered. □



Aruba to me

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received an amazing picture from **Maddy and David** who live in New Bedford, Massachusetts and have



been coming to Aruba for many years. They say:

"My wife and I have traveled all over the Caribbean and the Hawaiian islands. We found Aruba to be the best of them all. The people, food, weather and travel time makes Aruba the hot spot for a great vacation." □



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Because music is for everyone

ORANJESTAD — Originally, music plays a very important role in the culture of Aruba. In schools, however, creative subjects such as art and music have come last and more importance is now attached to language and math lessons. The initiative that Leerorkest Nederland, learning orchestra, took a few years ago, and has now also brought to the Caribbean islands, aims to change this. We are convinced that creative subjects such as making music together are just as important as learning to count, write and read. Due to their home situation, many children often do not have the opportunity to take music lessons and / or learn to play an instrument. The Stichting Leerorkest Aruba would very much like to change this and together with the Leerorkest Nederland has made a start on Aruba.

A musical and social project

Leerorkest Aruba aims to give all children in Aruba the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument, during and after school. It has now been scientifically proven that making music together is not only fun, but also very good for the total development of children. In this way they learn to work together, to build more self-confidence, but in addition, their creativity is stimulated, their brain learns to make other connections and they learn to lis-

ten to each other in a positive way, to take each other into account and to help each other.

'Music education has been shown to have a positive influence on IQ, learning performance, word analysis and phonological skills. There is also preliminary evidence that music education can facilitate the learning of foreign languages.'

Quote from the chapter 'The value of arts education. Allegations and Evidences' (Ellen Winner, Stéphan Vincent-Lancrin).

Accessible structure

By introducing a Learning Orchestra in the schools, we can set up an accessible structure within the schools so that all children have a chance to discover and develop their musical talents. The advantage is that the lessons will initially take place during school time.

Children receive weekly lessons from a passionate music teacher.

A start is made with General Musical Education Lessons and this is gradually extended to the method of the Learning Orchestra: playing together on instruments in a real orchestra!

Children learn in a playful and fast way to learn to play the violin, cello, trumpet, trombone, flute or clarinet and then play together in a class orchestra!

The organization of the Leerorkest in Aruba is in the hands of the local



organization Stichting Leerorkest Aruba (foundation: October 2019).

Music for ALL Children

Aruba has three major school boards, namely DPS (Public Schools Service), SKOA (Foundation for Catholic Education Aruba) and SPCOA (Foundation for Protestant Christian Education Aruba).

In total there are about 41 regular primary schools in Aruba. Stichting Leerorkest Aruba hopes to one day be able to introduce the Leerorkest to all primary schools.

Leerorkest Aruba started a pilot on September 23, 2019 at four primary schools (three from SKOA and 1 from DPS). The instrument lessons are also given at two schools.

The headmasters and teachers are very enthusiastic that music lessons are finally coming back to school in the form of a Learning Orchestra! Leerorkest Aruba has chosen to start in the 2nd class with a preparatory series of general musical education, and to start in the 3rd class with the lessons on the instruments. We believe that children who have a good basic musical education

learn to play the instruments faster. Due to the challenges of the Corona virus, it has been decided to start in the 2020-2021 school year with online lessons in general musical education. If the schools are (temporarily) closed, these lessons can in any case be continued within the home school.

Nora Eleonora, director of DPS, wholeheartedly endorses the goals of the Learning Orchestra. She is very happy with the start of the pilot project at one of their schools and hopes that the project will spread to other schools within the DPS board. About 25% of the primary schools on the island come under the DPS board.

Recently, a very positive consultation took place between Anusca Baily of SKOA and Leerorkest Aruba, in which SKOA has indicated that they would like to start with the general musical education programme presented by the Leerorkest at all their schools (with about 7,000 children in total!). Finally the goal of the Leerorkest is getting closer: to offer music for ALL children. □





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Aruba Hospitality & Security Foundation organized Proactive Security training

ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Hospitality and Security Foundation offered complimentary training to the security managers in the tourism zone. The Proactive Security training is based on the Israeli security model and teaches the managers how to prepare their teams to recognize threats before they take place.

According to the President

of the AH&SF, Tisa LaSorte, "while Aruba's tourism is recovering, it is important for the security teams to continue enhancing their skills so they can help stop crimes from taking place. AH&SF is happy to offer this special training and to observe great participation". The Proactive Security training was created and led by the American firm Chameleon Associates.

AH&SF thanks La Cabana, Alhambra Ballroom, and Aruba Marriott Resort for hosting the 3 days of training. Online sessions will also be offered to the security guards and the Beach Police agents this year. The Aruba Hospitality & Security Foundation was founded by AHATA in collaboration with the Police Department in 2001, with the mission to support safe-



ty in the tourism zone.

AH&SF projects are financed by the Aruba Tour-

ism Authority, with funds generated by the tourism levy charged to tourists at accommodations. □

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Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received an amazing story from **Nora Cortez and Pedro Cortez** from São Paulo, Brazil. They wrote:

"Our beloved Aruba!

We don't know when we are going back to Aruba! A country, an island and people that became part of our lives, my wife and I, after more than twenty five years there, spending one or two weeks, but, certainly, not less than ten days, at least twice a year. Aruba was our choice to commemorate my 70th birthday and our 35th anniversary with all the family! Covid has come and postponed the party. When is



this nightmare going to finish? When are we going to find out a way to coexist with that virus? Good signs increase our hope to be again in Aruba very soon. A lot of members of the Marriott's team in Surf, Ocean, Stellaris and Renaissance have gotten so close to us! Time to see them again. All of them have a place in our memories! We were used to read every morning "Aruba To-

day" in the shadow of the hut on the beach, during our stays. Nowadays, we access virtually to know about the island and our friends. Who knows? We have already made our reservations for this year and bought our air tickets. Full of hope to see again the generous Aruba's sunset and all other precious attractions of the island! Let's keep our fingers crossed." □



New or used? Either way, price hikes squeeze U.S. auto buyers

By TOM KRISHER and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER
Associated Press

FENTON TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) —

The viral pandemic has triggered a cascade of price hikes throughout America's auto industry — a surge that has made both new and used vehicles unaffordable for many.

Prices of new vehicles far outpaced overall consumer inflation over the past year. In response, many buyers who were priced out of that market turned to used vehicles. Yet their demand proved so potent that used-vehicle prices soared even more than new ones did.

The price of an average new vehicle jumped 6% between January of last year, before the coronavirus erupted in the United States, and December to a record \$40,578, according to data from Edmunds.com.

Yet that increase was nothing next to what happened in the used market. The average price of a used vehicle surged nearly 14% — roughly 10 times the rate of inflation — to over \$23,000. It was among the fastest such increases in decades, said Ivan Drury, a senior manager of insights for Edmunds.com.

The main reason for the exploding prices is a simple one of economics: Too few vehicles available for sale during the pandemic and too many buyers. The price hikes come at a terrible time for buyers, many of whom are struggling financially or looking for vehicles to avoid public transit or ride hailing because the virus. And dealers and analysts say the elevated prices could endure or rise even further for months or years, with new vehicle inventories tight and fewer trade-ins coming onto dealers' lots.

The supply shortage arose last spring after the coronavirus hit hard. Automakers had to shut down North American factories to try to stop the virus' spread. The factory shutdowns reduced the industry's sales of new vehicles and resulted in



In this image made from video, cars drive through the used vehicle lot at a LaFontaine auto dealership in Fenton Township, Mich., Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021.

fewer trade-ins. So when buyer demand picked up late in the year, fewer used vehicles were available.

Compounding the shortage, rental car companies and other fleet buyers — normally a major source of used vehicles for dealers — have been selling fewer now. With travel down and fewer people renting cars, the fleet buyers aren't acquiring as many new vehicles, and so they aren't off-loading as many older ones.

"It's like a weird perpetual motion machine right now with pricing," said Jeff Goldberg, general manager of Goldie's Motors, a used vehicle dealership in Phoenix.

Charlie Chesbrough, senior economist for Cox Automotive, predicted a tight used-vehicle market with high prices for several more years.

"There are millions fewer used vehicles that are going to be available starting next year, 2022 and 2023," he said.

The resulting price spike essentially has created three classes of auto buyers: Those affluent enough to afford new vehicles. People who can afford late-model used cars. And buyers with low incomes or poor credit who are stuck with older, less reliable vehicles.

The industry is still trying to recover from the pandemic's devastation last spring. The resulting factory closures shrank output by 3.3

million vehicles. Sales temporarily dried up, and so did the influx of trade-ins. Once the factories restored production in May, demand turned hot. Problem was, the supply of vehicles fell well short of demand, especially for pickup trucks and SUVs. Prices surged. And new-vehicle purchases for the year tumbled — by nearly 2.5 million to 14.6 million. When Larry Parsons of Hartland Township, Michigan, went to buy a pickup truck in August, the question of whether to buy new or used was unfortunately an easy one.

"We did look at new trucks, but the price is excessive," he said. "Some trucks cost upwards of \$70,000. It's to the point where it's ridiculous."

Instead, Parsons settled on a 2019 Ford F-150 with 29,000 miles on it. The truck, priced at \$52,000 when new, cost \$37,000. He also bought an 84-month warranty to cover the vehicle while he is still making loan payments.

To be sure, vehicle prices had been rising well before the pandemic struck, with many buyers choosing loaded-out trucks or SUVs and taking on loans of six years or more to keep their payments low. Even so, used prices had remained relatively low, with an ample supply of 3 million-plus vehicles returning to the market each year from leases.

Then the virus hit. With it

came government stimulus checks, which many buyers who used as down payments. Because they weren't spending on restaurants or vacations, some people spent even more on vehicles than they otherwise would have.

"If I'm going in at \$40,000, I might as well spend \$45,000," Drury said of buyers. "I might as well treat myself."

Even with loans of more than 60 months, average monthly payments range into the mid-\$500s for new vehicles, putting them out of reach for many. Right now, said Chesbrough, the Cox Automotive economist, the bulk of the growth in the new-vehicle market is in the \$50,000-and-above range.

In recent years, automakers had set the stage for higher prices by scrubbing many lower-priced new vehicles that had only thin profit margins. Starting five years ago, Ford, GM and Fiat Chrysler (now Stellantis) stopped selling many sedans and hatchbacks in the United States. Likewise, Honda and Toyota have canceled U.S. sales of lower-priced subcompacts. Their SUV replacements have higher sticker prices.

"The industry has been abandoning that \$30,000-and-below price point," Chesbrough said. "Essentially, they've been forgoing that territory to the used car market."

The increased demand

and higher prices for late-model used cars have spelled trouble for lower-income buyers, noted Art Ramos, who runs a used-vehicle store in McAllen, Texas, near the Mexico border. Unemployed people who were receiving jobless aid during the pandemic have had trouble securing a loan. Those who can buy typically have to look at much older vehicles with significant miles on them.

"All the people who were unemployed for all these months — I couldn't get them approved," he said.

When lower-income buyers are able to get loans, they typically must pay higher rates — sometimes over 20% with some lenders, Ramos said.

In the past, dealers wouldn't have bothered with those trade-ins; they would have sent them to regional auction houses. But auto quality has sharply improved in the past decade. So LaFontaine's group is reconditioning such cars and providing credit counseling for buyers with lower incomes or poor credit. "Every year, we increase our ability to cost-effectively recondition vehicles that we can present to consumers and stand behind it," said Mike Jackson, CEO of AutoNation, the country's largest dealership group.

Dealers say competition for used vehicles, especially from upstart online auto sellers Carvana and Vroom, contributed to the price increases with bidding wars at auctions. Still, Jackson argues that autos remain affordable because consumers are typically receiving more money for their trade-ins. Interest rates remain low, too. New-vehicle loan rates not subsidized by automakers are averaging 4.4%, according to Edmunds, while used loans average 7.8%.q

Average prices did subside a bit in January. But that might be deceptive, said Edmunds' Drury. Fewer expensive new and used luxury vehicles were sold during the month, he said, thereby temporarily lowering overall prices. □

Mars landing video: 'Stuff of our dreams'

By **MARCIA DUNN**

AP Aerospace Writer

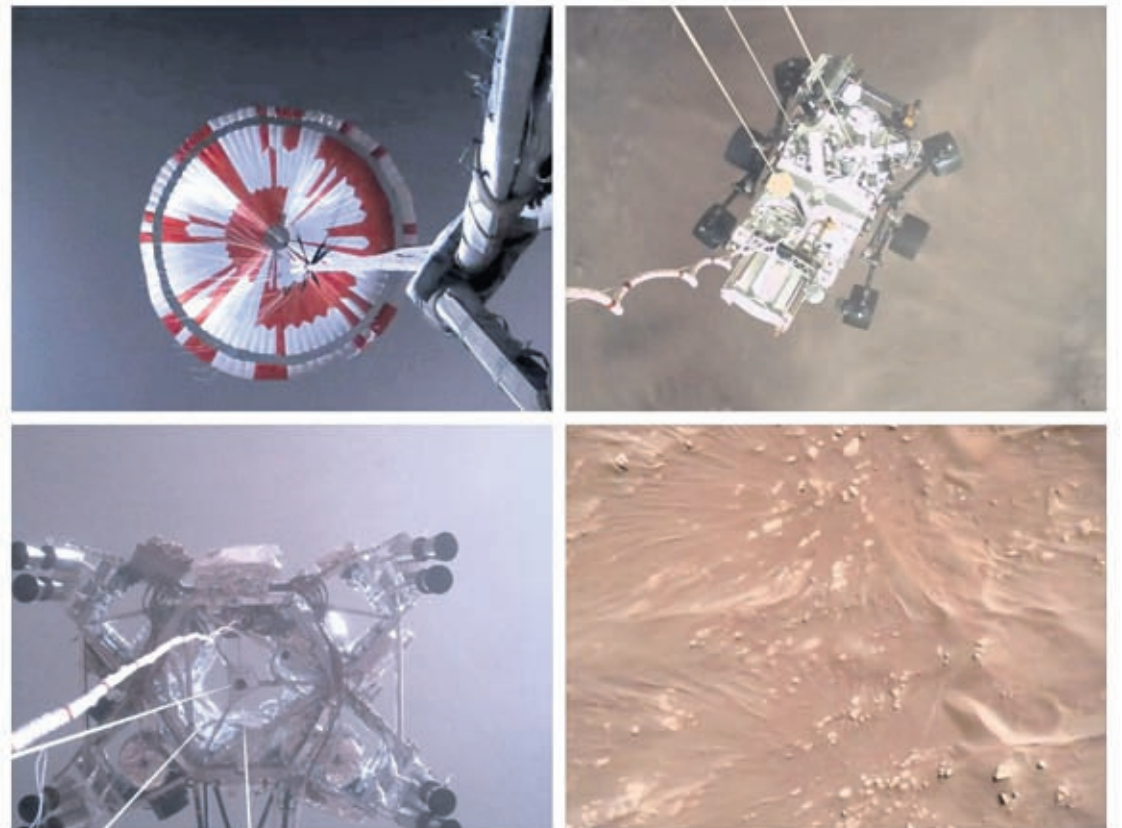
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)

— NASA on Monday released the first high-quality video of a spacecraft landing on Mars, a three-minute trailer showing the enormous orange and white parachute hurtling open and the red dust kicking up as rocket engines lowered

the rover to the surface.

The footage was so good — and the images so breathtaking — that members of the rover team said they felt like they were riding along.

"It gives me goose bumps every time I see it, just amazing," said Dave Gruel, head of the entry and descent camera team.



This combination of images from video made available by NASA shows steps in the descent of the Mars Perseverance rover as it approaches the surface of the planet on Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021. NASA releases

Associated Press

The Perseverance rover landed last Thursday near an ancient river delta in Jezero Crater to search for signs of ancient microscopic life. After spending the weekend binge-watching the descent and landing video, the team at Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, shared the video at a news conference.

"These videos and these images are the stuff of our

dreams," said Al Chen, who was in charge of the landing team.

Six off-the-shelf color cameras were devoted to entry, descent and landing, looking up and down from different perspectives. All but one camera worked. The lone microphone turned on for landing failed, but NASA got some snippets of sound after touchdown: the whirring of the rover's systems and wind gusts.

Flight controllers were thrilled with the thousands of images beamed back — and also with the remarkably good condition of NASA's biggest and most capable rover yet. It will spend the next two years exploring the dry river delta and drilling into rocks that may hold evidence of life 3 billion to 4 billion years ago. The core samples will be set aside for return to Earth in a decade. □

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By Dave Green

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4	2					1	7	
7						6		

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Difficulty Level ★★ ★

2/24

In Israel, mayo provides miracle for endangered turtles

Associated Press

MICHMORET, Israel (AP) — When it comes to saving sea turtles, Israeli rescuers have discovered that mayonnaise is a miracle.

Employees at Israel's National Sea Turtle Rescue Center are treating endangered green sea turtles affected by a devastating oil spill that has coated Israel's coast with thick black tar. The spill, which Israel's Nature and Parks Authority has called one of the country's worst ecological disasters on record, has coated most of Israel's 120 miles (195 kilometers) of Mediterranean coastline with sticky



Guy Ivgy cleans 6-month-old green sea turtle from tar after an oil spill in the Mediterranean Sea, at Israel's Sea Turtle Rescue Center, in Michmoret, Israel, Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021.

Associated Press

tar. It has caused extensive damage to wildlife, including sea turtles.

Guy Ivgy, a medical assistant at the Sea Turtle Rescue Center in Michmoret, north of Tel Aviv, said 11 turtles are being treated.

The center is run by Israel's Nature and Parks Authority. Workers have been removing the toxic substance from the reptiles' airways and found a creative way to flush it out of their digestive tracks. □

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Narcotics Anonymous
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Andra Day shines in overstuffed Billie Holiday bio

By MARK KENNEDY
AP Entertainment Writer
Billie Holiday has always been a monster of a role. Diana Ross tackled her on film and Audra McDonald did it on stage. Now it's time for Andra Day — a singer and actress perfectly named to play Lady Day — and she shines. It's a pity the film she's in is so messy. In the frustrating "The United States vs. Billie Holiday," Day gives it her all as Holiday but she can't save a film that is overstuffed and also thin. Director Lee Daniels and screenwriter Suzan-Lori Parks offer an unfocused, meandering work for much of the time, interrupted by devastating scenes that feel like a punch to the gut.

Day plays Holiday in the last years of her life as a haunted and crushed icon, an addict with terrible choices in men but the voice of an angel. Day's body is angular and lean and seemingly always prepared for blows to rain down, a piece of gum and a cigarette ever-present in her mouth. But



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Andra Day in "The United States vs Billie Holiday." Associated Press

she is also liable to punch back and rip into anyone crossing her. It is a remarkable performance, not least because it is Day's first acting role. Daniels and Park have chosen as their skeleton an unlikely love affair between Holiday and Jimmy Fletcher, a Black federal agent

ordered to infiltrate her group and get her arrested for using heroin. Why? Because whites cannot stand her singing the anti-lynching song "Strange Fruit." The material is adapted from Johann Hari's "Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs." It's now the third re-

cent movie project to show government infiltration of Black leaders, following the "MLK/FBI" documentary and the film "Judas and the Black Messiah." The film suffers a stuttering start — and the introduction of a poor framing device with a sit-down Holiday interview — before going

back in time 10 years and tracing the toll drugs and abuse slowly take on an increasingly haggard Holiday, leading to her death in 1959.

The natural villain in this piece would be the agent who rats out Holiday several times before falling in love with her. The filmmakers haven't quite figured him out. Why would Holiday allow a federal agent who has helped arrest her twice back into her life? "It's complicated," she says.

Trevante Rhodes, who was super in "Moonlight," plays the infiltrator, a man torn between his job and his race. He and fellow Black agents toil in the basement in segregated areas, tasked with planting evidence to bring down Black icons for white America. "You ever feel strange about what we're doing?" an agent asks Fletcher. The real bad guy is Federal Bureau of Narcotics leader Harry J. Anslinger (a mustache-twirling Garrett Hedlund), who is a virulent racist and cartoonishly unsubtle about it. "This jazz music is the devil's work. That's why this Holiday woman has got to be stopped," he says.

But a film that desperately needs to be taut is anything but, making space for over-the-top dog funerals, distractions like Roy Cohn and Holiday's friendship with Tallulah Bankhead. And yet there are moments of brilliance, as when Jimmy takes heroin and Lady Day appears in the haze of his high as a child to take him for a flashback to the whorehouse she spent time in as a youth. It is a fascinating technique but quickly abandoned. □

Grammy-winning duo Daft Punk break up after 28 years



In this April 17, 2013 file photo, Thomas Bangalter, left, and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, from the music group, Daft Punk, pose for a portrait in Los Angeles.

By MESFIN FEKADU
AP Music Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Grammy-winning electronic music pioneers Daft Punk have announced that they are breaking up after 28 years. The helmet-wearing French duo shared the news Monday in an 8-minute video called "Epilogue." Kathryn Frazier, the

Associated Press
band's longtime publicist, confirmed the break up for The Associated Press. Daft Punk, comprised of Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, have had major success over the years, winning six Grammy Awards and launching international hits with "One More Time," "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" and

"Get Lucky." Bangalter and de Homem-Christo met at a Paris school in 1987. Prior to Daft Punk, they formed an indie rock band named Darling. They officially formed Daft Punk in 1993, and the helmeted, mute and mysterious musicians released their debut album, "Homework," in 1997. They first found success with the international hit "Da Funk," which topped the Billboard dance charts and earned them their first Grammy nomination. A second No. 1 hit and Grammy nomination followed with "Around the World." Daft Punk spent time touring around the world and reached greater heights with their sophomore album, 2001's "Discovery." It included the infectious smash "One More Time" and "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger," which Kanye

West famously flipped into his own hit "Stronger," released in 2007. It won West the best rap solo performance Grammy at the 2008 show, where West and Daft Punk performed together onstage. A year later, a live version of "Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger" won Daft Punk the best dance recording Grammy — their first win — and their "Alive 2007" album picked up best electronic/dance album. But it was the 2014 Grammys where Daft Punk really took the spotlight, winning album of the year for "Random Access Memories" and making history as the first electronic act to win the highest honor at the Grammys. The duo won four awards that night, including record of the year for their bombshell hit "Get Lucky," featuring Pharrell Williams and Nile Rodgers. □

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5	9	6	7	4	1	2	3	8
4	2	8	3	9	6	1	7	5
7	1	3	2	5	8	6	9	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

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2/24

Tiger Woods seriously injured in California car crash

By **STEFANIE DAZIO** and
DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tiger Woods was seriously injured Tuesday when his SUV rolled over and ended up on its side in suburban Los Angeles, authorities said. The golf superstar had to be extricated, and his agent said he was undergoing leg surgery.

Woods was alone in the SUV when it crashed shortly before 7:15 a.m., the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said in a statement. No other cars were involved.

The cause of the wreck wasn't clear. The two-lane road curves through upscale suburbs, and the northbound side that Woods was driving on descends steeply enough that signs warn trucks to use lower gears. The speed limit is 45 mph.

A KABC-TV helicopter showed the car on its side, with its front end heavily damaged just off the side of a road near a hillside, with its air bags deployed. The 45-year-old Woods was taken to the hospital by ambulance, authorities said.

"Tiger Woods was in a single-car accident this morning in California where he suffered multiple leg injuries," said his manager, Mark Steinberg. "He is currently in surgery and we thank you for your privacy and support."

The crash happened on the border of Rolling Hills Estates and Rancho Palos Verdes, two upscale communities about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of downtown Los Angeles.

There was a second crash when a vehicle that had apparently stopped to help Woods got hit, said Christopher Thomas, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County Fire Department. That wreck was very minor, and no one was hurt.

Woods was in Los Angeles over the weekend as the tournament host of the Genesis Invitational at Riviera Country Club, where he presented the trophy on Sunday.



Tiger Woods looks on during the trophy ceremony on the practice green after the final round of the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

Associated Press

He was to spend Monday and Tuesday filming with Discovery-owned GOLFTV, with whom he has an endorsement. A tweet Monday showed Woods in a cart smiling with comedian David Spade.

According to Golf Digest, also owned by Discovery, the TV shoot was on-course lessons for celebrities, such as Spade and Dwyane Wade, at Rolling Hills Country Club.

Woods, a 15-time major champion who shares with Sam Snead the PGA Tour record of 82 career victories, has been recovering from Dec. 23 surgery on his lower back. It was his fifth back surgery and first since his lower spine was fused in April 2017, allowing him to stage a remarkable comeback that culminated with his fifth Masters title in 2019. He has carried the sport since his record-setting Masters victory in 1997 when he was 21, winning at the most prolific rate in modern PGA Tour history. He is singularly responsi-

ble for TV ratings spiking, which has led to enormous increases in prize money during his career. Even at 45, he remains the biggest draw in the sport.

The SUV he was driving Tuesday had tournament logos on the side door, indicating it was a courtesy car for players at the Genesis Invitational. Tournament director Mike Antolini did not immediately respond to a text message, though it is not unusual for players to keep courtesy cars a few days after the event.

Woods feared he would never play again until the 2017 fusion surgery. He returned to win the Tour Championship to close out the 2018 season and won the Masters in April 2019 for the fifth time.

He last played Dec. 20 in the PNC Championship in Orlando, Florida, an unofficial event where players are paired with parents or children.

He played with his son, Charlie, who is now 12. Woods also has a 13-year-

old daughter.

During the Sunday telecast on CBS from the golf tournament, Woods was asked about playing the Masters on April 8-11 and said, "God, I hope so." He said he feeling a little stiff and had one more test to see if he was ready for more activities.

He was not sure when he would play again.

Athletes including Mike Tyson and Magic Johnson offered hopes Woods would make a quick recovery.

"I'm sick to my stomach," Justin Thomas, the No. 3 golf player in the world, said from the Workday Championship in Bradenton, Florida. "It hurts to see one of my closest friends get in an accident. Man, I just hope he's all right."

This is the third time Woods has been involved in a car investigation. The most notorious was the early morning after Thanksgiving in 2009, when his SUV ran over a fire hydrant and hit a tree. That was the start of shocking revelations that he had

been cheating on his wife with multiple women.

Woods lost major corporate sponsorships, went to a rehabilitation clinic in Mississippi and did not return to golf for five months.

In May 2017, Florida police found him asleep behind the wheel of a car parked awkwardly on the side of the road. He was arrested on a DUI charge and said later he had an unexpected reaction to prescription medicine for his back pain. Woods later pleaded guilty to reckless driving and checked into a clinic to get help with prescription medication and a sleep disorder.

Woods has not won since the Zozo Championship in Japan in fall 2019, and he has reduced his playing schedule in recent years because of injuries.

The surgery Tuesday would be his 10th. He has had four previous surgeries on his left knee, including a major reconstruction after he won the 2008 U.S. Open, and five surgeries on his back. □

Analysis: NBA's Eastern Conference has a standings logjam

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

This is a bizarre season for the NBA in a bizarre time for the world.

Most of those who must attend the All-Star Game in Atlanta don't seem particularly excited by those plans. Arenas across the country are somewhere between almost empty and totally empty because of coronavirus protocols. Game schedules are typically known months in advance; nobody knows what the second week of March looks like yet.

All of this is most unusual. There is, however, one constant: The Eastern Conference standings are a mess. Spending any time trying to figure how the East is going to shake out would be a futile undertaking, because it's clear that the teams themselves have no idea. Miami won the East last season and has spent zero days over .500 this season. Milwaukee — the NBA's best regular-season team in each of the past two seasons, a team with two-time reigning MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo — just had a streak of five consecutive losses. Every team in the East has had at least one three-game losing streak; 11 of those 15 teams have had multiple three-game slides and the season isn't



Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra gestures to the team during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

even half over.

If all that wasn't enough, the Western Conference is dominating its friends from the other half of the league. The West is winning 57% of its games against the East. That's on pace to be the biggest margin since the West won 58.4% in 2014-15 — and virtually assures that the West will win the regular-season series versus the East for the 21st time in the last 22 seasons. The East won four consecutive years against the West from 1995-96 through 1998-99; the only season in which

the East beat the West since was 2008-09.

By now, that's to be expected.

Having only three teams better than one game above .500, two months into the season, that's the big surprise out of the East. Philadelphia (20-11) and Brooklyn (20-12) sit atop the East, and Milwaukee (18-13) is right in their shadow. That's where the ridiculously tight traffic jam starts, with the next 10 teams — Indiana, Toronto, Boston, New York, Chicago, Charlotte, Miami, Atlanta, Orlan-

do and Washington — all within 3 1/2 games of each other.

Some offer a very simple explanation.

"I see a lot of inconsistent teams in the East," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "And we're one of them." That being said, there are signs that some teams are figuring it out.

Brooklyn just went 5-0 on a West road trip, playing most of those games without Kevin Durant. Toronto started 7-12; the Raptors are 9-3 since. The Bulls and the Heat have already won

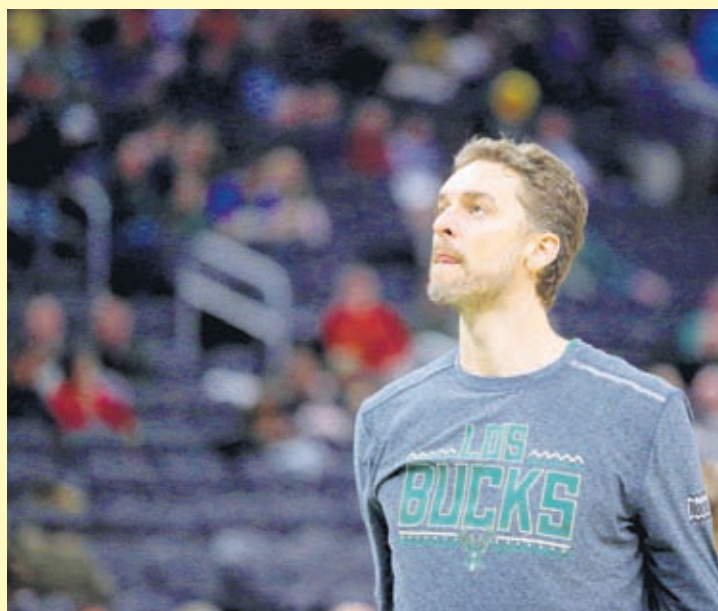
more games in February than they did in January. The Wizards beat the reigning champion Los Angeles Lakers on Monday night for a fifth consecutive victory, meaning they're 5-0 since starting 6-17. And the Knicks — this is true and amazing — have a chance at their first winning calendar month since going 8-7 in November 2017.

"We're striving to become a 48-minute team," said Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau, who has already made a sizable impact in his first couple of months in New York. "We've got a long way to go."

The good news is that there's a lot of time left.

Teams will get their second-half schedules finalized by the NBA this week. Everyone, even those going to Atlanta for the one-day All-Star events on March 7, will get a little bit of a much-needed break after a very hectic first couple of months to the season. The trade deadline on March 25 will be interesting, because with the play-in tournament happening this year — and 20 teams essentially going to the postseason, even if four will be eliminated in very short order — more teams than usual will technically be in the playoff race. □

Pau Gasol says he's going home, signing again with Barcelona



Milwaukee Bucks' Pau Gasol warms up before the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers in Milwaukee, in this Thursday, March 7, 2019, file photo. Associated Press

BARCELONA (AP) — Pau Gasol is going home, announcing Tuesday that he will sign to play with FC Barcelona again and rejoin the franchise with which he started his professional basketball career more than 20 years ago.

The Spaniard has previously said he wants to play in his fifth Olympic Games but that he needs to be playing this season to give himself a chance of making it to Tokyo.

Gasol is a six-time NBA All-Star, winning a pair of championships with the Los Angeles Lakers. The 40-year-old who was born in Barcelona last

appeared in the NBA on March 10, 2019, for Milwaukee.

"I'm happy to return to the club where I began, and I'm excited about this new opportunity," he wrote in a post on social media. "I hope to contribute to the first team very soon. I want to thank Barca and its technical staff for making it possible to join them."

Earlier this week he had denied the move to Barcelona, saying he remained "focused on my recovery and I am not ready to get back to competing just yet." His statements Tuesday made no mention of the Olympics.

Gasol debuted for Barcelona in the 1998-99 season, was part of two Liga ACB — the top Spanish league — championships in three years, then was the No. 3 pick in the 2001 NBA draft. He was the rookie of the year for Memphis in 2002, won three Olympic medals with Spain and was part of the team that won the FIBA world championship, now called the Basketball World Cup, in 2006. Gasol has been bothered by a foot injury over the past two years, though Tuesday's announcement suggests he believes he's nearly ready to play again. □